



12 March 2003

## **INFORMATION PAPER**

**SUBJECT:** Pelekane Bay Ecosystem Restoration, Island of Hawaii, Hawaii

1. **Purpose:** To provide information on the subject project.
2. **Major Points of Interest and Facts.**
  - a. The Pelekane Bay study is in the Preliminary Restoration Plan or the reconnaissance stage at this time. The project is being investigated under Section 1135 of Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) 1986, Environmental Restoration. Under Section 1135, a cost-sharing agreement is not required until before the construction phase. The feasibility study is scheduled to be initiated in March 2003.
  - b. Pelekane Bay is located on the northwest coast of the island of Hawaii, approximately 85 miles northwest from Hilo and 33 miles north of Kailua-Kona, and immediately adjacent to Kawaihae Deep Draft Harbor.
  - c. The narrow cove now referred to as Pelekane Bay was created by the development of the Kawaihae Deep Draft Harbor and Kawaihae Small Boat Harbor, both Federal projects. Makeahua and Makahuna Gulches, old stream courses that are dry except during periods of heavy rainfall, discharge into the bay. During the construction periods, a number of marine biological studies were conducted. These studies concluded that fish populations did recolonize the impacted areas after construction but with less species diversity and markedly different species composition. Pelekane Bay was characterized as being very depauperate in corals because of heavy damage by siltation from the harbor development, elimination of the dense hardwood forests in the upper watershed, and grazing of cattle.
  - d. The purpose of the Pelekane Bay Ecosystem Restoration Project is to reverse degradation to the coral reef ecosystem and improve water quality in Pelekane Bay to conditions that prevailed prior to the development of the Kawaihae Deep Draft Harbor and area. Restoration features being evaluated are sediment retention facilities and erosion control measures. In addition to improvements of the reef ecosystem, the project is also expected to benefit the Pu'u Kohola Traditional Cultural Property.
3. **Congressional Interest.** There is minimal Congressional interest in this project, at this time.